MUTINY

A PAPER OF ANARCHISTIC IDEAS & ACTIONS

NUMBER 7

OCTOBER 2006

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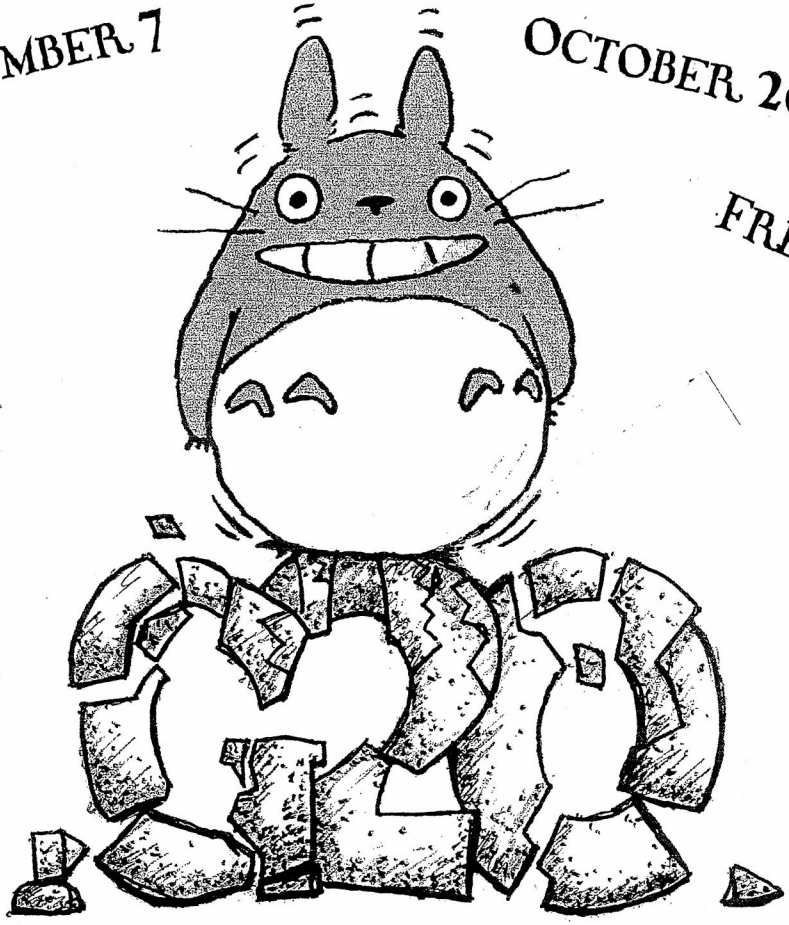

the 128 Social Centre

Affinity Beyond the Barricades

Non-Violence and its Discontents

I'm Waging War on Teenage Life

A Space Outside Callout

Mutiny issue seven
October 2006

(The Mutiny collective does not necessarily agree with all the opinions of contributors. Contributors do not necessarily agree with all the opinions of the mutiny collective. The mutiny collective doesn't agree with all the opinions of the mutiny collective.)

This month's editors: Angry Nerd, Dumpstered Twin, Graf Cat, Huevo Podrido, Marshall Cinque, Princess Mob, Vikram.

If you can help distribute the zine we love you. We also love letters, comments, contributions, pictures, comics etc. Send them to:

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Mutiny was started as a group interested in exploring different ways to resist war at home & abroad. It was formed by a group of people who didn't see the war on Iraq as an aberration in a system that is otherwise fair & good. Instead we see it as part of global systems of capitalist exploitation: systems that affect the lives of people all over the world, including out own lives.
We started a monthly zine to explore different avenues of resistance. We know there are lots of radical ideas around & we want people to write about their experiences & opinions.
Mutiny meets regularly. Contact us if you're interested.

Mutiny collective is making plans for action in Melbourne as part of the G20 protests (November 17-19.) Sydney people in particular, get in touch & let's get organised.

A Space Outside is a collective formed to organise a convergence and accommodation space, interactions with radical thinkers, practical direct action skill-shares, and most importantly radical actions and interruptions to the 2006 G20 meeting in Melbourne.

In the lead up to the G20 fiasco in Melbourne, A Space Outside will be providing a space in which to workshop new ways of resisting and disrupting the influence and trajectory of capital and hegemony. This will be a space from which to collectivise and activate; a physical space from which to orchestrate the bothering of the status quo. A space that is radically different from, and beyond the control of dominant society where we can think freely and plan ways of increasing our capacity to resist beyond the G20 mobilisation. Not just **A Space Outside**, but a space from which to actively resist within.

We are inviting people to come and stay, and to organise radical responses to the current political climate.

Militarism, the war on terror, the privatisation of public spaces, and the neo-liberalisation of Australian Universities are provoking activist responses and campaigns, but are also disturbing our capacity to challenge these issues. We want to learn more about these political issues, and reflect on our methods and strategies for dealing with them. To critically examine governments' linking of aid and development objectives with military strategic and economic aims and the work of development and aid NGOs who fail to effectively critique governments' imperialist agendas.

We are asking for people to come and share their skills, their art and their politics.

aspaceoutside@hush.com | | www.aspaceoutside.org

everywhere you walk is indigenous land

BRIEF NEWS

Oaxaca, Mexico

As this issue of *Mutiny* is being put together various reports are coming to us from the struggle going on in Oaxaca, Mexico. In the context of La Otra Campaña, the controversies of election fraud and the struggle and repression in Atenco, Oaxaca is shaping up to be the site of a profound struggle between the multitude and power. With origins in a teacher's strike for improved conditions for staff and students, and in the face of the violence of the state, the struggle in Oaxaca has blossomed into a vast uprising of social cooperation and resistance. To quote:

> "From that moment (the repression of June 14th) the direction of the struggle changed course, converting itself into a popular-teacher movement, which counted on the support of the citizens of Oaxaca, and this made possible the joining together of all the various voices into one, giving birth within a month after the police repression to the Popular Assembly of the Peoples of Oaxaca (APPO), a space in which more than 350 organizations (unions, groups of indigenous peoples, students, campesinos, women, neighbourhoods, and among them, the democratic teachers of Oaxaca which itself is made up of more than 70,000 workers)."

From that moment the struggle has become a journey of peaceful civil resistance. Through acts of resistance, communication media have been taken over, barricades have been raised, the seat of the three government bodies has been blockaded, 5 megamarches have been called, the last one bringing together about 900,000 persons, a historic event (and this in the city alone) and taking over 24 municipalities in the state." (Taken from http://elenemigocomun.net/)

The media in Mexico is now reporting that the state is preparing already engaging in a military repression of Oaxaca involving a combination of black operations and slander, kidnappings and the deployment of a police state. More information can be found at http://www.narconews.com/ , http://arn.espora.org/oaxaca/)

Here in Australia, the Mexico-Australia Solidarity Network is doing what it can to spread the word of the struggle and the resistance to the state and neo-liberalism. **Check out our website at www.masn.org.au**

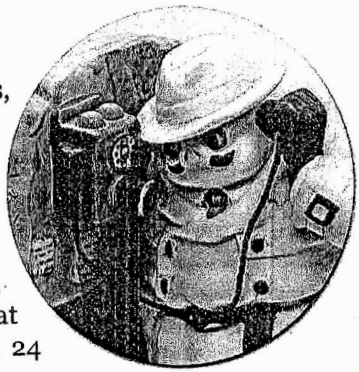
Palm Island and Brisbane

After a lengthy investigation the state coroner of Queensland has concluded that police officer Chris Hurley was indeed responsible for the death of Mulrunji Domadgee in a cell of the police station on Palm Island. Hurley was found to have punched and kicked Domadgee to death after taking him into custody. Further, the coroner's report found that the original arrest for drunk and disorderly conduct should never have occurred. And finally, the report also found the internal police investigation that was conducted immediately after the death of Domadgee to be flawed and completely lacking in transparency and objectivity (what a surprise!).

It was the findings of this internal investigation, which completely absolved Hurley, that sparked the Palm Island riots late in 2004 during which the police station was burned to the ground. While Hurley was moved from Palm Island and given a cushy job on the Gold Coast, the residents of the Island had to face the violence of heavily armed police conducting dawn raids and making mass arrests (including the interrogation of children). This is on top of the daily hardships of life on the Island whose poverty and lack of resources easily match conditions generally thought of as 'third-world'.

Although, Hurley has just this week finally been suspended as a police officer (suspend 'em all I say) there is no guarantee the coroner's findings will even see him go to trial.

Phone-tap Epidemic in Australia



According to the NSW Council for Civil Liberties, those in Australia are 24-times more likely to have their phones tapped than those in the US. In a twelve month period between 2004 and 2005, 2883 warrants for telecommunication interceptions were issued by non-judges in Australia. In comparison, of the same period, US courts issued 1774 warrants, which means that Australia had issued 63% more warrants, and 24 times more per capita, than the United States.

The vast majority of the warrants issued (93%) are by the Administrative Appeals Tribunal. Members of the AAT are lawyers with more than five years experience that have been nominated exclusively by the government. These non-judges are not sworn to protect our civil liberties, and are contracted by the government. Furthermore, these contracts might not be renewed if they do not act in favour of the government.Recent amendments to the law in March 2006 granted more power to government agencies to be able to conduct these types of personal surveillances.

i'm waging war on teenage life.

two letters

to whom it may concern,

today, i picked up a copy of mutiny along with a copy of philosophy of punk. this mixture of anarchistic ideology, way too overwhelming for a 14 year old's mind like mine, consequently led to hazy aspirations of one day saving the world from corporate domination. i may be told that i am way too naïve & unprepared to comprehend politics (considering that the catholic school system deems politics inappropriate in the schoolyard) but i am prepared to learn, i may sound like a typical teenage outcast, thirsting for rebellion but i truly am concerned.

i am afraid that my generation of youth, drowned by the bullshit of modern technology, will pass by without taking responsibility to stop the injustices of society. politics should concern the youth of today because they'll eventually have to care, why not start today? over and over again, teenagers are subjected to capitalist corporate exploitation, simultaneously being exposed to conservative propaganda subliminally being force-fed. over & over again we convince ourselves that it's all going to be okay, after hearing about the oil crisis & lives being lost in iraq. AIDS will stop itself. racism will stop itself. there will always be coal to burn. well, frankly, it won't be okay. youth of today are slipping away into apathy.

the average angst-filled adolescent mind is malleable & the mainstream media knows this fact better than the teenager. they'll do whatever it takes to make the youth conform to what the big guns of today want & when tomorrow comes, the same issues will arise again.

i'm afraid there will be no anarchists, no feminists, no revolution, no resistance. we'll just continue to be distracted with the boom of the media revolution (with the key political figures laughing down at us) & we'll all be going round & round again.

so, therefore, i'd like to begin the demise of this conception of my generation & i'm waging war on teenage life. i'm taking things into my own hands by (trying to) keep myself politically aware & to start controlling my future. i want to let everyone out there know that there's more to life than the O.C. & my chemical romance.

yours sincerely,
fuckin' A

I am a teenager of a rare kind. I rebel, not against my parents, but against my generation of media scum and the age of technology. Generation Y, born into the world of computers and intelligent machines, has allowed the corporate media to further explore and exploit the hungry public.

In 1992, when laws were formulated by Hawke's labour government to restrict media ownership in Australia, little did anyone know what was to come ahead. With the arrival of the new generation of corporate suckers, new media options were directed and pressures to overthrow the decayed laws grew. Last month, we saw Helen Coonan's plan to get rid of the expired laws, allowing media companies to own one newspaper, television station and radio station. The Internet and its creeping domination has also got media powers and advertisers in a frenzy. Last week, I found out that Rupert Murdoch, (who would have guessed), owns Myspace.com, a website utilised by millions of youth worldwide.

Corporations aren't the only ones who advertise today. Individuals, in particular teenagers, 'sell themselves' with the aid of web blogs, MSN, webcams and photo webpages. Communication has become impersonal and bullying is typically executed silently through e-mails, text messages and IMs.

Question: why should a 14-year-old care so much about being brutally exploited by mainstream media? Just as long as I'm getting my daily Hollywood goss and getting the lowdown on the newest everything, I should be content.

Answer: I have witnessed what media has done to my generation. Technology is the one, single thing that separates us from past generations. Technology has enabled the new generation of youth to get used to getting what they want, when they want it. This has contributed to the typical attitudes of teenagers believing that they are in control. People need to realize that there is much more to see- beyond the radio dial, beyond the glossy pages of Dolly and beyond the perfect faces pasted across the glass walls of bus shelters everywhere.

It's a shame to say that Australia is a home of free speech when almost every second of our lives are controlled by a handful of corporate trash. We are controlled by these demons who force their conservative, imperialistic opinions on us through what we read, watch and hear. It's a shame to think that so many of us cannot see through the bullshit propaganda, we cannot realize that we are being mentally numbed so that we may feel that racism and war are things that we will always have to live with.

Alas, the capitalist monsters will not get away with anything. When the world finally wakes up to realize the crimes of our corporate rulers, there will be an uprising.

yours sincerely, fuckin' A

From the relative isolation of my armchair in the sun, it seems that in the lead up to the G20 protest that an ideology of Non-Violent Direct Action (NVDA) has cemented itself as the orthodoxy that delineates the parameters of what is considered acceptable forms of protest. It is the contention of this little missive that this ideology is based on a poor understanding of the operations of power in our society and needs to be cracked open to create the space for new discussions about the relationship between antagonism to capitalism, practices of freedom and relations of force.

The ideology of NVDA argues that it is both *moral* and *effective*. A comrade helped me in the composition of this article by summarising some of the arguments from *How Nonviolence Works* by Allan Cumming. The ideology seems to have two fundamentals: it posits that violence is a choice and the choice not to be violent is both the right thing to do in the here and now and that it will win campaigns. It seems to assume that either violence is an *aberration* from the normal function of capitalist society, something that arises when things go wrong or that by appealing to some higher moral authority violence can be undermined. But violence in capitalism is not an aberration. As Walter Benjamin writes: "The tradition of the oppressed teaches us that the 'state of emergency' in which we live is not the exception but the rule." Since capitalism is based on the exploitation of our labour it as a matter of course deploys numerous forms of violence and discipline to contain and normalise our rebellions and deviant behaviour. If we are to take up struggle capitalism will use as much force as it can to smash us, to intimidate us, to hurt and deform our desires. This is especially the case in the condition of an endless "war on terror". Practitioners of NVDA act on the basis of how they want the world to be not how it is, and they do so in a way that the denial of the latter leads to the impossibility of the former.

The second element rests on an idea that there is a moral truth to existence. It is no surprise that NVDA has roots in religious groups such as the Society of Friends (the Quakers). Even

when practiced without overt reference to religious ideals it is still premised on the idea that there is some overall moral authority to existence and allegiance to this will bring eventual success: that if we do what we believe is moral then a just end will be achieved. This seems unconvincing to me. There is no overall right or wrong, there is only power: our *potentia* or power-to, our ability to create and work with each other and the world we live on; and *potestas* or power-over the transformation of our collective creative capacities into relations of domination. Ethics and politics that eschew mythologies of a transcendental right or wrong then have to base themselves in the mess of living, on uncertainty and creation. Also even with the best of intentions a politics based on an ahistorical morality is invariably authoritarian: life is made to submit to an over-arching moral code. That is why NVDA focuses so much on training: a process that is just as much as about producing a certain kind of person as it is about acquiring practical skills. NVDA is a process of internal and external discipline: a silencing of those parts of us that are angry and explosive and reducing the political space for its expression through numerous subtle applications of power.

NVDA often avoids the ambiguities of violence by posing a selective definition of what is violence. I feel that violence is a term that lacks a stable definition because it is almost always used pejoratively. Thus your support of an action is often the basis for whether you define it as violent or not. The classic case is property destruction. Violence is used to describe everything from aggressive language to the carpet bombing of cities. How can such a diverse array of phenomena, all of them with their specific context be judged by a single moral benchmark? There is undoubtedly a difference between a partisan of the Warsaw Ghetto shooting a SS soldier and an SS soldier shooting a partisan of the Warsaw Ghetto. And there are obvious similarities: both involve an individual killing another by the same method, but to see them as equivalents is to efface the vast differences in power and politics between the two. And we can not escape the violent nature of such an act by deifying the partisan and demonising the SS man. Both are humans, living specific lives, both have dreams and aspirations and loves and family, both could be cruel and brutal. Violence then is ambiguous, it hangs in relationship to various antagonism and conflicts in society, and a moment of violence could either tip into a void of brutalisation and horror or open up new possibilities and practise of freedom.

70 years ago 300,000 comrades confronted the British Union of Fascists and the constabulary in what became known as the Battle of Cable Street. Arguably this mass physical confrontation blunted the growth of fascism in the UK and helped unite various parts of the working class when then, like today, racism was an active tool of power to divide and exploit us. The police horses were disabled by the throwing of marbles under their hooves. Horses, beautiful and powerful animals, their history and development woven into that of humanity, have been used at various times as biological machines, weapons of war as well as real and loved companions. What happened to the horses that fell? Those horses now lame would have been put down. What would have happened if these marbles were not thrown? Perhaps the police charge would have succeeded, the fascists would have marched and been emboldened and the life of many in England would face the consequences of all that.

But it is ridiculous to think the ends justify the means. Is there not a risk that in our resistance to the violence of the state we might lose something about ourselves; our relations with each

other that make our struggles worthwhile? Like the Bolsheviks at the end of the Civil War, you can win militarily and have nothing worth fighting for left, and have committed such horrors that the victory seems little more than a monument to ashes.

If we reject the constraints of NVDA, where does that leave us? Of course there is a direct opposite of NVDA that is a negative inversion: action is only celebrated and worth while on the basis that it is violent. Struggle is reduced to and valorised only on its confrontational elements. Similarly it argues that we should *choose* to be violent and appeals to a higher moral truth (the Struggle, The Wild, The Defence of Mother Earth etc.) and that this is justification for any action. This also ignores what might be really subversive at any one moment. This ideology fails to see capitalism as a *social relationship:* rather it sees it as a series of things. And whether these things are cops or shop windows they are seen as being external to us and can be broken. In this sense it argues that our power is military, violence is thus the only tool.

If we reject the idea of an overall morality to base our decisions on what are we left with? Not The Struggle, but struggle. Rather than a transcendental truth we are left with the antagonisms that are immanent to daily life. A big mobilisation should be a moment where these antagonisms can manifest and grow. We no longer can talk about one broad thing like "violence" but a plurality of questions of tactics, cooperation and ethics in which there is no set answer. It is silly then to be either for or against violence. And ridiculous to make either the defining point of your politics. Rather, I believe that because the whole subject is so difficult and confusing, what we need to struggle for is the kind of movement which is autonomous, horizontal and democratic so these questions can be explored in the most open and fluid ways and that maybe rather many answers find many questions. Rather than moralising about violence we need to begin to seriously co-operate around the ways we communicate to each other, internal organisation, build bonds of solidarity and deep layers of trust.

But maybe one more thing, my contention is that our power lies neither in an appeal to a higher moral authority, nor through militarism. Rather it is our collective creative abilities that is, in the broadest sense, our labour that makes capitalism. Thus it is our ability to autonomously assert our co-operation outside and against the forms of capitalist society, which is our *exodus*, that both dissolves capital's power and asserts our ability to build new lives. Obviously at a summit protest we manifest in a way that is a confrontation, but if we just confront them and stop, we are still on their territory. It is our ability to constitute new collective forms that can pull down a fence, transform a street, manifest co-operation that is subversive. To my mind it is this process of creation that any willingness to engage in violence must be subordinate to. Thus rather than asking 'is this violent', perhaps we can ask if it increases our collective strength, if it cements solidarity and trust, if it reduces capital's apparatus of capture and control, if it subverts gender norms, if it creates free spaces and so on? These are the important criteria.

When we stand against the police charge, or glue the locks of a helipad we are asserting *and defending* the other ways of being we have built and are building. As Virno writes: "The struggle can carry its destructive nature to its [logical] end only in so far as it already assumes another way of living, communicating and producing."

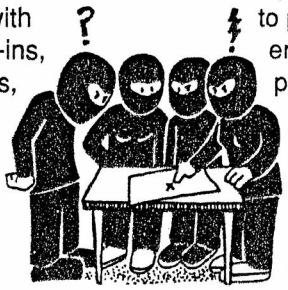
Both the ideologies of non-violence and its inverted opposition are based on historical narratives that are highly deterministic. The world is understood in a particular rigid way, social change is already defined and thus any action in the present must conform to a certain model. They are *pre-judged.* This excludes the possibility that a moment of social antagonism might be an event that actually ruptures the normality of existences, our pre-established ideas and pose specific and novel problems that have to be addressed in open and participatory ways. Ideologies fail to realise that it is because these moments are *moments of excess;* that they go beyond what was thought before, produce new ways of being, new knowledges; that is why they are radical and subversive. It closes down the vistas of refusal and thus works to ward off the radical potentials of events like the G20 – that we can break from the paths written for us. To enter into struggle with a moral order is to stay chained to the world you are rebelling against, or to deny the possibility of real rebellion. If a non-determined relationship to violence and struggle is frightening it is because we do not know the consequences: what will happen if you stand in front of a tank, or beat up an undercover cop, break a window or stick flowers in a gun? Not knowing the consequences, having to make ethical and collective decisions in a specific moment of time is the *condition of freedom.* Capital and State axiomatise and determine 'reality'; revolt dissolves certainties, opens up new possibilities, builds paths by choosing to walk them without really knowing where they go. Communism is not a utopia that greets us because we have been good militants (let alone 'activists'); it is the collective experiment with freedom today.

by a grumpy cat (with assistance from green rat, angry nerd and graff cat)

DIRECT ACTION: CORPORATE ENGAGEMENT DAY

Friday 17th of November 2006

A fabulous opportunity to engage in a fun-filled day of decentralised direct action against the corporations that support and profit from the misery of millions. Bring friends, neighbours, instruments, costumes, good ideas, your nanna. Organise your own action or jump on board with someone else's. Think sit-ins, street theatre, occupations, reclaiming public space, graffiti, culture jamming, dancing in the foyers of big business. Get down and dirty (and creative) in the streets of Melbourne.



Let Friday now be known as Corporate Engagement Day! Are you cranky at ANZ for investing in the Iraq war, or Kellog Brown and Root as another business profiting from the war? Australian Federal Treasurer Peter Costello has personally put Energy and Mineral Resources on the G-20 Melbourne agenda with the explicit purpose of discussing ways to preserve Australia's massive energy consumption per head of population that seems to be part of "the Australian way of life". As the government seeks to expand the uranium industry, shall we engage with nuclear companies? It might be time to pay them a visit and tell them what we think.

Check out www.aspaceoutside.org for inspiration/ideas/more information.

128

When I went to New Zealand recently, I was carrying a torn scrap of paper on which someone I'd met briefly had drunkenly scrawled;

"128 Abel Smith st
anarchist Activist Squat
Free Bycylce libary
Like travelers also"

I guess an image had been knocking around in my mind of a big warehouse, single room inner city squat with some old couches, a bunch of bikes in the corner, and a collection of rowdy travelling punks from around the world. Which can be amazing, if you're in the mood. But I was feeling quiet, and I sometimes get a bit scared about meeting new people....
So after a few days in Wellington, I plucked up my courage and wandered along to 128 to pick up some info on a coal mine blockade happening in the south island...

128 is a radical social and resource centre, a cheaply rented heritage-listed gorgeous rambling old 2-storey house in the middle of Wellington. It has three live-in "caretakers", and is managed and maintained by an open collective who meet monthly.

At the moment, here's what you'll find at 128: downstairs there's...

- an anarchist library called Revolting Books!, with books, zines, audio and visual materials on a range of topics, including anarchism, radical ecology, feminism, DIY culture, history of struggles, queer stuff, interesting fiction, and heaps more;
- a bicycle workshop called The Mechanical Tempest, where you can get free assisted bike repair (donations for parts welcome), buy a bike for $20, or just use one for however long you want for a $20 bond;
- a big welcoming kitchen where Food not Bombs food gets cooked as well as food for fundraisers etc, and of course copious cups of tea and delicious meals by/for whoever is living and staying there;
- a cosy lounge room with a fireplace and as many couches and cushions as it can fit, for hanging out in and having meetings in;
- a community noticeboard, a table filled with propaganda, and a wall full of posters on stuff that's coming up and struggles to get involved in;
- a bin full of a regular supply of bin-dived bread for anyone who wants it;
- a wood workshop and loads of tools;
- a veggie and native plants garden outside.

And upstairs, there's:

- the caretakers bedrooms;
- an office space with a few computers and shelves packed with files;
- an art space which can also be used for dance, yoga, etc, and a whole bunch of resources like paint and paper;
- a ping-pong table;
- a visitors bedroom, with four home-built bunks and heaps of cosy quilts and blankets, where people can stay in return for pitching in their bit around the space;
- a womyn's room for anything womyn and children want, including a safe sleeping space.

For the six days or so I was around 128, here's what I saw happening and/or got involved in:

- an amazing over-dinner discussion about community response to sexual assault and rape with a bunch of womyn and men who are getting active around this stuff, followed by a really great-fun anti-rape all-womyn graff mission;
- bikes being fixed;
- a hilarious dance rehearsal and practise performance by a bunch of people going to perform at some festival on the weekend;
- a bin-diving mission;
- a big cook-up for a community dinner to raise money for the campaign to stop an

international arms conference happening in Wellington on 17th-18th of October (go to www.peacewellington.tk or www.converge.org.nz/pma/nowarp.htm to learn more);
- a hundred cups of tea and conversations;
- post-production work on a film called Kotahi te Ao, a global grassroots film exploring solutions for a sustainable world (contact info@kotahiao.org);
- games of ping-pong;
- people going to and fro The Freedom Shop, an anarchist bookshop with heaps of books, zines, patches, etc that shares a space with Oblong, a not-for-profit collectively run internerd café at the Left Bank off Cuba Mall (contact the_freedom_shop@yahoo.com);
- bikes being borrowed to go to an exhibition about a warfie's radical uprising in the early 1900s (had a cute ship reconstruction with fake rats running along the rafters!), and on to a march in solidarity with the people of Lebanon and Palestine;
- a sewing circle afternoon;
- distro-ing the latest magnetic fridge diary, a monthly what's-on around Wellington for environmental and social struggle meetings, events, etc. (To join the list, email magneticfridgediary-subscribe@lists.riseup.net);
- Jews for Justice (radical secular anti-Zionist Jewish collective) organising a Rosh Hashanah (Jewish New Year) dinner (contact jewsforjustice@gmail.com to learn more about Jews for Justice);
- people using the library;
- excitement about the upcoming annual all-ages DIY Punkfest on the 20th-21st October (excellent Sydney band Scum System Kill are going over to play);
- a Zapatista fundraising tea-party, where five of us sat around drinking tea in a loft-bed and looking through a whole bunch of beautiful Zapatista-made clothes and art that some people brought back from Mexico to sell for fundraising for the Zapatista struggle;
- a goodbye dinner for me (thanks everyone for welcoming and farewelling me so warmly even after such a short visit! Miss you all and big love for ya).

So, it turned out that 128 and all the people who frequent it were the most excellent parts of my entire trip to New Zealand, and I am so so happy that I braved my quiet mood and wandered along to take a peek (well, ok, dancing in falling snow for the first time ever and drinking water-drops off fern-leaves in ancient misty temperate rainforest were both pretty incredible as well). Everybody I met who lived there or utilised the space was so open and welcoming, excited to talk with me about what's happening in NZ and learn about what's happening in Australia, and really keen on increasing connections and threads between Australian and New Zealand struggles. And whilst 128 was often bustling with heaps of lovely, busy people who were always ready for a conversation or could find something for me to help out with, I also found it easy to take as much space as I wanted to just be quiet and do my own thing. It was so inspiring to experience such a totally collectively-organised long-term radical hub of activity, an open yet safe place that provides shelter and sustenance and space and resources and support for living and engaging in such a wide range of activities and struggles and subversions. The generation of ongoing permanent spaces like 128 where our collective creativity can manifest, and thus things like organising, living, and struggling stop appearing to be distinct categories and weave and fly together, is really crucial and really amazing, and really isn't difficult. My imagination is dancing with all the possibilities of creating similar spaces in Australia...

If you go to New Zealand, go to 128!!
128 Abel Smith st
Te Aro, Wellington NZ
Contact 128 by email: 128abelsmith@gmail.com
Or phone (from Australia): 0011 64 4 972 9260;
(from NZ): 04 9729260

by green rat

Affinity Beyond the Barricades

Vikram

(These are my personal thoughts & are not written on behalf of the Mutiny collective.)

"Affinity Groups: A small group of activists (usually less than 20) who work together on direct action. Organised in a non-hierarchical manner, are able to work in a way that is flexible and decentralised, usually using consensus decision making, and are made up of trusted friends or other like-minded people. Affinity groups can be based on a common ideology (eg. anarchism), a shared concern for a given issue (eg. anti-nuclear) or a common activity, role or skill (eg. street medics)."
(From A Space Outside zine, www.aspaceoutside.org)

With the G20 coming up, as with every larger (summit) protest, talk invariably turns to affinity groups and decentralised organising. Visions of a perfectly enacted chaos with prepared, separate crews pulling together for support and to devise the next act of subversion before melting into the sidewalks. A series of haphazard actions timed to the minute with the forces of the state in time a step behind like some (Groucho) Marxist farce. Splashing the dull grey tones of the next host city with a vibrant display of spontaneous insurrection. We marvel at our ability to make things happen at the last minute, at how just a bit of organising helps our actions be that much more effective, at our common language of revolutionary autonomy played out through affinity groups organised just the week before.

Yet in all this excitement a harsher critique is obscured – that the model of organising we slip into around these protests is often quite centralised. I'm not suggesting the sort of protest described above is the problem, or even questioning whether we should be mobilising against these summits of 'the powerful people'. What's more important is how we get to the point of taking such decentralised action. What's at stake is the possibility of real decentralised action occurring beyond summit protests, of creating solid, longer-lasting networks of support and solidarity that enable us to slide from the hold of incapacitating structurelessness.

There's a flaw that is exposed whenever we begin organising for a protest such as the G20. The idea that affinity groups will form at these 'mass' protests tends to fall into a trap of relying on gathering a larger group of people together from which affinity groups can then form. This is the wrong way round. For a real decentralised, autonomous protest, people should be encouraged to come along already in groups with established affinity and commonality, with ideas for action that can then be shared with other groups taking part in the larger protest. Certainly, these already existing groups should be open to, and even encourage, other people wanting to join their action, because the point here is definitely not to add another layer of exclusivity and elitism to the way protests are organised. What I'm arguing here isn't particularly new and I think many people involved in organising for the G20 protests would agree. The problem is, we never seem able to break the cycle. And this continues because there is still too great an emphasis on organising for the next 'mass' protest instead of maintaining affinity groups that can partake in ongoing struggle away from the big-city,

bright lights and media glare of summit protests.

My point is definitely not to argue that summit protest are pointless (hell, I'm going to Melbourne for the G20, aren't I?). They can be an inspiring explosion of our anger, making visible (even if mostly symbolic) the ongoing resistance of our everyday lives. A chance to explore our political commonalities. They help create the possibility of networks forming as individuals and groups gather in the same space. But as all these things occur during the few days of a summit protest it is also easy to get lost in a false impression of the interconnectedness of struggle when often the reality is far more isolating.

I'm going to reflect on the Mutiny collective in Sydney to look at some of the positives as well as the difficulties of keeping a small collective (affinity group) functioning away from the fleeting sense of purpose provided by a summit protest. Mutiny is a small collective existing mostly in a limited geographical area with a focus on the links between capitalism and militarism (the Iraq war obviously being the catalyst). There are no outstanding 'successes' to point at which suggest it is an example to follow. Rather, its success has been in surviving as a collective with anarchist ideals for more than 3 years (wavering, of course from regular activity to practically nothing). Just as important as mere survival is that at different times people involved have been able to ask whether it was worthwhile to keep going or if it was time to move onto other projects. These moments of reflection often sparked a change that allowed Mutiny to begin its next phase. I'll get to specifics in a moment, but this isn't meant to be so much about Mutiny as what I've learnt from being involved in it about the realities of affinity-based, decentralised politics.

One of the most obvious and useful things a small collective can do is to take on researching and producing propaganda. I actually feel like I have an understanding of the state of increased militarism we are living under and my position in it due to the excellent research people in Mutiny have undertaken. This knowledge also provides the possibility of finding commonalities in struggle with other groups. So while I think it is important to not just jump from one issue to the next depending on what is 'popular' at the time a sense of connection with other struggle is crucial for there to be any feeling of inspiration. Isolation is dispiriting and makes it hard to envisage enacting change on a wider level.

In terms of Mutiny the problem of isolation goes both ways. We could definitely be better and more creative in information sharing and enacting solidarity with other groups. And we constantly must be aware of the potential problem of being too cliquey and inaccessible. Yet, on the other side, why does it feel like we are the only anarchist collective (friendship groups not included) in a city as big as Sydney? It's not true, but it feels like it and if anyone else feels like that too, then there is a real problem with how we are unable to keep networks going beyond summit protests. For the sake of effectiveness there needs to be better attempts to overcome this atomisation so as to form a basis of solidarity which could have actual results like the sharing of resources, the spreading of propaganda and possibly even the creation of more usable revolutionary spaces. If we can't do this locally, what is the point of thinking about it internationally?

To hopefully tie this up in some useful way I want to look at the example of Mutiny's engagement with the Forbes (summit) protests in August last year. First a little background. After reflecting on a series of fairly random actions at the offices of various war profiteers in Sydney we decided that we might need a little more direction. So we decided to make ANZ bank an ongoing target because of its role in the redevelopment (that is, the selling off of resources to foreign companies) of Iraq. We also figured that because it was a bank with many branches and with a concern about public image it was something a small collective could take on. We also thought it might be possible to make it pull out of Iraq for the sake of its public interests elsewhere. (However, making ANZ leave Iraq was never our final aim: we saw it more as an opportunity to more generally expose the interests of corporations in the war). And, most importantly, we weren't the only group involved: we co-ordinated action with some student anti-war groups.

Alongside the ANZ campaign, Mutiny organised a conference (Subplot) in the days before the Forbes protest and invited people to come to Sydney for it. Even if the protests were small there'd be a chance to network. And this is where we come back to the first half of this article. While they were already on the backfoot (they'd already sent out one press release defending their role in Iraq as a direct response to one campus-based action) the ANZ campaign hit a high point at Forbes. We successfully organised decentralised actions with numerous people involved and we shut down every ANZ branch in the CBD for 3 days straight. We talked with people from around the country and from New Zealand about the possibility of organising locally then co-ordinating an international day of action against ANZ.

Yet within a month all momentum was lost. As affinity groups that formed specifically around those protests dissolved, Mutiny also really struggled for a combination of reasons (including weariness and the post-Forbes letdown). It felt especially isolating after the possibilities that seemed to appear during Forbes. And that's the point: if we only focus on these protests without the more difficult ongoing effort of working in affinity groups, maintaining networks and providing solidarity on a smaller level, then we don't live up to the potential there might actually be in gathering together at a 'mass' protest. Mutiny was really small over the whole summer, so we took the opportunity to go through a bit of a process of reflection and one thing I think we realised was that we were still a group of people with political affinity. With not much else in terms of revolutionary politics all that apparent in Sydney we settled on one thing a small group of people could do – start a monthly zine.

What I've been trying to get at is the importance of maintaining the model of affinity group organising and networks away from 'mass' protests. Let's try to re-imagine the type of action I've mentioned in the very first paragraph and transfer it to the relatively mundane struggles of everyday life. It might not seem as exciting but it is in this realm where a well-defined and enacted politics of revolutionary autonomy can be most inspiring. At this level it presents an alternative to the dead politics and disempowering hierarchies of institutionalised 'opposition' groups while challenging capitalist oppression on numerous fronts.

Reviews

(book)
Shut Them Down! The G8, Gleneagels 2005 & the Movement of Movements

At www.shutthemdown.org you can order a copy of this book or download single chapters. Why bother with yet another post-summit-protest-analysis anthology? Because social movements move: the circumstances, actions & debates shift, & this book is helpful reading if we're preparing to protest the G20.

A unique feature of the 2005 G8 was the Make Poverty History campaign: a campaign to welcome the G8. Rock stars, politicians & NGOs came together to try to make the G8 look like the good guys, with both the power & the will to save Africa. Paul Hewson's "It's the politics, stupid" is a close look at how this worked. There was Tony Blair & other neo-liberal politicians, desperate to throw a cover of legitimacy on the G8 meeting & the maintenance of global capitalism. There were big NGOs that collaborated with them, eager to regain their place as rightful representatives of the poor & exploited who had been emerging to speak for themselves, talking less about charity & more 'about "self-organisation" & "struggle from below". And then there was the protest movement, which, Hewson argues, was unable to organise politically against the G8 & the co-option of global justice campaigns into a feel-good charity spectacular. One of the failures of the movement, he argues, was an unwillingness to argue politically against Make Poverty History, seeing them as naive potential allies who had been co-opted by the government instead of identifying Make Poverty History for what it was, a government creation. This article is a useful reminder that the liberalism of NGOs isn't an absence of political analysis but a set of politics, & that charities aren't neutral organisations: they have their own agenda.

In Chapter 1, "On the Road", we remember why we do these protests: that while capitalism is everywhere & everyday, summits can be 'moments of concentration for us': 'The whole idea of the counter-summit wasn't really about protesting the G8....It was about life... Doing stuff for ourselves, making decisions, running our own lives ... this process of creation, invention & becoming isn't a "feeling", it's a material reality.'

Princess Mob

(gig)
"The Limbus Jukebox"
The Cambridge Hotel, Newcastle

Over the long weekend some friends & I drove to this gig for the This Is Not Art festival (TINA). Headlining were Melbourne band My Disco & Sydney MC Macromantics. There were some other acts on this fun-filled nite at The Cambridge Hotel but they were sh@t. We were so tired from the trip that we mostly bitched about their crappy 'soundscapes'. Like, monotonous music off a laptop with odd vocals & hippy drumming that droned on til 3am! We had to have lots of V's, chocolate & bourbon & cokes to wake up & get drunk enough to enjoy ourselves. Everyone pissed on so much that the ATM broke & the bar staff & security were seriously overworked. We met heaps of our Sydney friends & had good chats over the noise, which was a good way of finding out about other TINA events.

So finally My Disco was up & they were fantastic. They played with such passion that they make odd jerky movements & very stern facial gestures. They have an intense noise/rock/punk sound, a lot like US band Big Black. Something that stood out was the minimalism of the way they played their instruments with creative rhythms stripped right back. The guitarist did some real interesting stuff: while the drummer played a bare rhythm with the bass going over it, powerfully accentuating every single hit, the guitar would do a type of 'wall of noise' over it all.

Macromantix performance was also impressive. Her set had a mixture of her intense rapping style & urban beats & samples that got the crowd dancing & waving their arms like homies. She goes through a range of powerful emotions. At times she expresses anger, sarcasm & pessimism through complex rhyming. She also insults, taunts, laughs & then sings melodically to deliver a more optimistic message. She incited the crowd to down the fence that kept them away from the stage (which was rad to watch from where I was sitting). I find her lyrics a little hard to understand but you can really sense her criticism coz she seems so pissed off. I have to admit that too much of her rapping sounded tedious within the one set & I reckon she would sound better within a group of MC's. Her DJ is a great accompaniment already - she raps, scratches & samples some catchy urban tunes but I think at least one more singer or mc is needed to liven up the set.

Belen

(film)
Rize (2005)

Directed by David Lachapelle, who's famous for his surreal hyper-glossy photography, *Rize* isn't what liberal reviewers portray it as. It's not a 'quaint', 'fashionable', 'revolutionary' (not in the way that it is so often thrown around these days) and simplistic dance 'fad' to add to Black America's 'coloured'-ful trend sets. It is so much more. It's about acting to reclaim what has been lost – an identity, a sense of pride, a cultural heritage, and a will to live in the ghettoes of Los Angeles.

I'd have to admit that I'd been a bit skeptical, and ignorant, with the political nature of the film, having only been exposed to commercial music clips featuring 'girly'-roled women, cameras focused on butt and crotch shots, and men brandising their practiced gawks, but I was pleasantly surprised – thrilled even.

Krumping/Clowning is a rhythmic collective exorcism, where the possessed and the exorcist are interchangeable, and where the intent is on shaking away the dredges of this mortal coil. The ritual is aggressive, explosive, filled with mock battles (and mock beatings), yet it is also playful, socially cohesive, and sometimes they even play on gender roles and notions of sexualised moves.

Before watching *Rize*, I could have sworn that somethings were just too horrible to try to reclaim/reappropriate, but at one point we witness a group of young black American girls krumping with one over the hood of a car – yes, there it is folks, a mock *police beating*! The irony doesn't escape the film either as the film begins with the origin of the dance movement – the LA riots of 1992, and the Rodney King police beatings.

Dumpstered Twin

(gig)
"Maggotfest" Night One

The Assassination Collective includes some friends from Melbourne, so I couldn't really write this review if I didn't like them. But I liked them a lot. I noticed really enjoying watching the performance. The constantly changing singers duelling with each other, bringing their own style as well as sense of immediacy, fun and anger (and lyrics to match all this, such as "If footy were free we could have a class war"). Maybe I sound like an old person but something about not screaming all the time gives me a stronger sense of connection with the emotion being conveyed when it is time to scream. I liked the band member who'd swap the guitar for a mini-keyboard and sit on the side of the stage in his own world – the melody of the notes floating over what were at times crunching, almost metal-like riffs. They should come to Sydney more.

I remember seeing and liking ScumSystemKill at some of their early shows and thinking of them as having a sludgy (not a bad thing at all) sound. They seem to be a fair bit faster now and while that definitely isn't always a good thing (often I find the fastest, most technical stuff really boring), this band has no problem reaching that really exciting, intense level of raucousness. Again there are excellent

duelling vocals (seems to be the way to go), but there's not much chance of catching the words here as they're roared towards you.

The Thaw was astounding. There were practically no vocals but that didn't matter. It's hard to imagine that just bass, drums and guitar could wash over you in such a stupefying way, but I was rendered too hopelessly lost to be able to describe their music. I remember wondering if this was what seeing 'Godspeed You Black Emperor' would be like. I'm not sure. And I definitely don't mean to denigrate through comparison. Sorry for the inadequacy of this.

Apologies to the bands that played earlier, whom I didn't see. Oh yeah, and full urgings to continue this positive turn towards variety at punk shows.

Vikram

(action)

Boeing Office Occupation
28 September 2006

"Now!", dumping her disguise as a flower delivery person, a member of our collective called us out of our huddle in the elevator.

Once inside we explored the space scattering and super-gluing reminders of war all around. We challenged the staff when they told us that they take care of "mostly" civilian flights, that they were "far removed" from all the bloody killing. We told them that that's exactly why we were there - to remind them of the part they play in mass death.

The security guard stood idly around while we wondered and tinkered, challenged and disobeyed. One of the bosses couldn't handle his orders being ignored and grabbed one of us by the arm, a moment later re-thinking and letting go in angry frustration. We sprinkled bombs on his frowning head. Other staff members were a little more levelheaded.

After about half an hour of disruption two cops arrived and did a great good cop/bad cop routine. The "good" one (if there is such a thing) "aksed" us to leave continued to very nervously stutter ill constructed sentences and muddled words – that was quite delightful. The "bad" cop (is there any other type?) did a big macho performance and refused to show us his badge for a while. This stalling was fine by us because staling was our plan. Finally, when the uniformed cops arrived, and stalling time began to edge towards "cuff em'" time, we decided to leave. We met up with our comrades and their banner downstairs and handed out some propaganda before dispersing away or to other actions.

Angry Nerd

(parallel universe action)

On September 28th, thirteen ratbags dressed respectable invaded the offices of Boeing armed with a bunch of flowers, red glitter, plastic soldiers and planes, paper bombs and propaganda. Inspired by the hope of disrupting the business of a $35 billion a year war profiteer, Mutiny distributed flyers outlining the Boeing's weapons manufacture and research statistics, and their demands that the company: 1) stop producing weapons; 2) donate ongoingly to Palestinan Refugee organisations; and 3) disclose information about their development of smart bombs.

The six or seven workers in the office at the time read the propaganda and immediately seized the means of production, dismantaling the hierarchy in Boeing factories, and the factory workers - collectively organised – began making weapons to arm the civilians of Palestine to liberate their land and minds from Israeli occupation. It was, after all, the anniversary of the second Intifada.

When, half an hour into the office occupation, the filth - both plain-clothed and uniformed - arrived, a sprawling war in which plastic bullets tore plastic flesh from plastic bone broke out. The carpet would never recover from the environmental damage of glitter and superglue.

Was it the infectious giggle of wanna-be superheroes or the toxic fumes from the glue that caused the cops to epiphany right there and then? No one will know for sure, but the streets are now safer as the state crumbled-mercenary upholders of the hierarchy saw their mates as cogs, stopped turning, grew rusty, fell out of the machine.

Rishin

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